

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01 AID-20 IO-14 SR-02

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NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01

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R 051432Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3429

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN 7118

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4443

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG

SUBJ: ISRAELI PRESS ON RAFAH JUNCTION SETTLEMENTS

1. MAARIV AUGUST 1 REPORTED THAT GOI HAD DECIDED TO ESTABLISH "ABOUT HALF A DOZEN NEW SETTLEMENTS" AT RAFAH JUNCTION, AND THAT THIS DECISION WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN NEXT FEW DAYS. DURING TOUR OF AREA ON JULY 31, DEFMIN PERES REPORTEDLY INDICATED GOI'S INTENTION TO STRENGTHEN ISRAELI PRESENCE IN RAFAH JUNCTION. MAARIV ARTICLE FURTHER CITES HAARETZ JOURNALIST AS CLAIMING TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE THAT, EVEN BEFORE LAST WEEK'S SEBASTIA INCIDENT, GOI HAD TAKEN DECISION ABOUT "COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OPERATION IN ANOTHER REGION...IN THE NEAR FUTURE," PRESUMABLY RAFAH JUNCTION AREA.

2. JERUSALEM POST AUGUST 2 REPORTED THAT GOI PLANS TO RESETTLE BEDUIN FAMILIES EVACUATED OVER TWO YEARS AGO FROM RAFAH JUNCTION IN ORDER TO MAKE ROOM FOR SIX NEW SETTLEMENTS.

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ABOUT 1800 DUNAMS BETWEEN RAFAH JUNCTION AND KIBBUTZ

KEREM SHALOM (WITHIN PRE-1967 ISRAEL) HAVE BEEN SET ASIDE FOR FIRST STAGE OF RESETTLEMENT PROGRM. THIS IS TO PROVIDE FOR 360 FAMILIES, HALF THE TOTAL OF THOSE EVICTED FROM RAFAH JUNCTION. EACH BEDUIN FAMILY UNIT REPORTEDLY WILL RECIEVE FIVE DUNAMS, THREE OF WHICH WILL BE IRRIGATED FOR RAISING VEGETABLES. AVERAGE INCOME FROM EACH OF THESE UNITS IS ESTIMATED AT IL 7000 YEARLY. FIRST STAGE OF THIS RESETTLEMENT PROJECT--BUILDING HOUSES AND PREPARING THE LAND--IS EXPECTED TO TAKE A YEAR, AT ESTIMATED COST OF IL 5 MILLION.

3. DURING RECENT VISIT TO RAFAH JUNCTION AREA, EMBASSY OFFICERS VISITED REGIONAL CENTER SITE ("YAMIT") WHERE CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING WAS WELL UNDERWAY. ACCESS ROAD LEADING FROM MAIN NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY HAD BEEN ALMOST COMPLETED WITH 4.5 KILOMETERS PAVED AND REMAINING .5 KILOMETER PASSABLE DIRT ROAD. A NUMBER OF CONSTRUCTION CRANES WERE OBSERVED AT REGIONAL CENTER AND ABOUT 30-40 PREFABRICATED HOUSES WERE NEARING COMPLETION. FROM LAYOUT OF SURVEYOR STAKES, IT APPEARS THAT SEVERAL HUNDRED ADDITIONAL UNITS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT FIRST FAMILIES COULD MOVE INTO HOUSING AT REGIONAL CENTER BY END OF THIS YEAR.

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